

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01

SPC-03 DRC-01 /068 W

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R 010430Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7851

INFO AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

MELBOURNE FOR MCHALE

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB PINT NZ

SUBJ: FOL VICE PRESIDENTIAL FIGHT HEATS UP

REF: WELLINGTON 0740

1. FEDERATION OF LABOUR (FOL) INTERNAL POLITICAL DIFFERENCES CAME INTO PUBLIC DOMAIN MARCH 28 TH PRESS REPORTS THAT PRESIDENT TOM SKINNER HAD REQUESTED FRANK THORN, VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, TO WITHDRAW FROM RACE. THORN REFUSED. THORN HAS CONFIRMED REPORT AND SKINNER HAS NOT DENIED IT. SKINNER CONTINUES SUPPORT INCUMBENT VICE PRESIDENT JIM BOOMER.

2. SKINNER OBVIOUSLY WORRIED ABOUT THORN AND IS ENGAGED IN MUD-SLINGING, ARM-TWISTING CAMPAIGN GET BOOMER REJECTED. FROM SKINNER POINT OF VIEW THORN A RABBLE ROUSER AND TOO MERCURIAL TO BE NUMBER TWO IN FOL.

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3. THORN, IN CONVERSATION WITH LABATT, STATED HE

WILL NOT PULL OUT OF RACE. HE BELIEVES FOL DOMINATED BY SKINNER IS DO-NOTHING ORGANIZATION. CONTINUATION OF SAME POLICIES WILL LEAVE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT OPEN FOR TAKEOVER FROM LEFT. ACCORDING TO THORN, FOL AS PRESENTLY MOTIVATED, UNABLE CONTROL OR COMPETE WITH LOCAL BRANCH LEVEL COMMUNIST LABOR LEADERS. THORN OPINED THAT COMMUNISTS ARE BIDDING TIME WAITING FOR RIGHT MOMENT TO TAKE ON SKINNER AND FOL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. SUCH A MOVE WOULD PROBABLY COME IN TRUMPED UP DISPUTE WITH NOT YET OPERATIONAL NEW ZEALAND SHIPPING CORPORATION OF WHICH SKINNER IS DEPUTY DIRECTOR.

4. THORN ALSO INDICATED THAT GNZ PUTTING SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN ITSELF AND FOL. GOVERNMENT HAS PROPOSED FIVE PERCENT GENERAL AGE INCREASE WHICH IS ENTIRELY UNACCEPTABLE WHEN TWENTY PERCENT BEING BANDIED ABOUT BY SEVERAL UNIONS AS APPROPRIATE FIGURE. FIVE PERCENT FIGURE WAS PUT TO FOL EXECUTIVE MARCH 28 BT MINLABOUR WATT WHO ABSOLUTELY REFUSED DISCUSS ANY HIGHER AMOUNT. THORN SEES GNZ ACTION AS DIRECT RESULT FOL INABILITY HOLD MILITANT UNIONS IN LINE.

5. COMMENT - WITHOUT AGREEING WITH THORN ON EVERY POINT, WE TEND TO FOLLOW HIS GENERAL ANALYSIS. FOL HAS MADE NO EFFORT INVOLVE ITSELF IN RESOLVING NUMEROUS LEFTIST INSPIRED STRIKES DURING PAST YEAR. ROLE OF EXECUTIVE TENDS TO BE PASSIVE AND, AS TIME GOES ONE, SELF-REINFORCING. FOR ITS PART LABOUR GOVERNMENT HAS ACCEPTED GREAT DEAL OF CRITICISM FOR BEING RUN BY SKINNER. FOL'S (READ SKINNER'S) INABILITY "KEEP THE BOYS IN LINE" HAS BECOME MAJOR IRRITANT TO GOVERNMENT. WITHLABOUR'S TERM NEARLY HALF COMPLETED PARTY HAS EVIDENTLY DECIDED TO TACK TOWARD GREATER INDEPENDENCE. DEPENDENT AS PARTY IS ON TRADE UNION SUPPORT THIS CAN ONLY LEAD TO TROUBLED AND STORMY PERIOD.
WOOD

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